



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Hope in the form of healthcare**

**ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia** – Hundreds of people gathered on a dusty parking lot outside of an elementary school that was temporarily set up as a medical clinic during the Medical Humanitarian Civic Action (HCA) Outreach Project, one of the many exercises of Khaan Quest 12 in and around Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 14.

The HCA portion of Khaan Quest was designed to provide an exchange of tactics, techniques and procedures, the exchange of medical services, and community outreach for the U.S. and Mongolian medical teams as they treat underserved communities. Among those on hand for this year's exercise was Secretary of the Army John McHugh. He toured the clinic, met with the multinational medical team and greeted the Mongolian people there for treatment.

Inside the school, the halls were filled with people, young and old, sitting on benches outside of classrooms that were transformed into various medical offices that ranged from pediatric and gynecological care, to optometric and neurological services. Children played and cried, elderly people sat patiently, and the halls were filled with the murmur of chatter as people waited their turn to be seen for their ailments.

"The number of individuals that they get to treat in just eight days is impressive," McHugh said.

In the room set up for optometric examinations, boxes of donated glasses of various prescriptions were stacked against a wall. Patients there were given eye examinations. Afterwards, they were given a pair of glasses that matched the prescription made by the optometric team.

In the U.S., glasses can cost up to a few hundred dollars, but in Mongolia, they can be well out of the affordable range of some people, explained Maj. Andrew Adamich, lead optometrist, 176<sup>th</sup> Medical Group, Alaska Air National Guard.

"There's nothing more gratifying than giving somebody the gift of sight," Adamich said.

In another room, children were seen by pediatric specialists. A young girl sat with her family; her face was thin, her eyes closed. She was diagnosed with having rickets (a disease often found in developing countries) by Capt. Tori Schmidt, physician assistant, 297<sup>th</sup> Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Alaska Army National Guard.

Through the interpreter, Schmidt asked the girl why she was not eating. The girl is malnourished and her teeth are showing signs of decay. Malnutrition is often one of the lead causes of rickets. She then explained to the family that they needed to get the girl vitamin D supplements in order to combat the effects of rickets.

"Programs such as this one have a positive impact on the communities," Schmidt explained. "The people get free assistance and leave with what they need, whether it's advice and treatment or acute care."

"The community is really happy," said Lt. Eakhijargal Manjiilaa, a neurologist with the Central Armed Forces Hospital in Ulaanbaatar.

Manjiilaa explained that this partnership between Mongolia and allied forces has helped healthcare practitioners in her community diagnose and treat illnesses that they did not understand previously.

"I am really thankful for the help with my community," she said.

"This has been a critically important opportunity, originally between the Mongolian and the United States Army -- particularly through the Alaska National Guard -- to get together to do interoperability training," McHugh said. "Over the last several years, the objective has grown. We have many nations here."

Partnerships such as the one developed through multinational exercises like Khaan Quest help all who participate share information and strengthen the bonds between their nations, McHugh explained.

"You don't make friends by fighting them," McHugh said. "You make friends by helping each other."

Khaan Quest is a regularly scheduled, multinational exercise sponsored by the U.S. Army Pacific and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces. Khaan Quest 12 is the latest in a continuing series of exercises designed to promote regional peace and security. This exercise marks the tenth anniversary of this regionally significant training event.

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## **Cutlines:**

### **120814-Z-MW427-066**

Cadets Saul Gandara and Houston Engelke, both students at Texas A&M University, assist an elderly woman up a flight of stairs at the medical clinic as part of the Medical

Humanitarian Civic Action Outreach Project during Khaan Quest 12 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 14. Khaan Quest is a regularly scheduled, multinational exercise sponsored by the U.S. Army Pacific and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces. Photo: Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 134<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard.

**120814-Z-MW427-069**

Capt. Tori Schmidt, physician assistant, 297<sup>th</sup> Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Alaska Army National Guard, treats a patient at the medical clinic as part of the Medical Humanitarian Civic Action Outreach Project during Khaan Quest 12 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 14. Khaan Quest is a regularly scheduled, multinational exercise sponsored by the U.S. Army Pacific and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces. Photo: Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 134<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard.

**120814-Z-MW427-074**

Capt. Tori Schmidt, physician assistant, 297<sup>th</sup> Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Alaska Army National Guard, treats a patient at the medical clinic as part of the Medical Humanitarian Civic Action Outreach Project during Khaan Quest 12 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 14. Khaan Quest is a regularly scheduled, multinational exercise sponsored by the U.S. Army Pacific and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces. Photo: Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 134<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard.

**120814-Z-MW427-169**

Staff Sgt. Joshua Clark, Medical Readiness non-commissioned officer, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 207<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment, Alaska Army National Guard, guides Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh through the medical clinic during his visit of the various Khaan Quest 12 exercise locations in and around Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 14. Khaan Quest is a regularly scheduled, multinational exercise sponsored by the U.S. Army Pacific and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces. Photo: Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 134<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard.

**120814-Z-MW427-183**

Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh greets Mongolian physicians at the medical clinic during his visit of the various Khaan Quest 12 exercise locations in and around Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 14. Khaan Quest is a regularly scheduled, multinational exercise sponsored by the U.S. Army Pacific and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces. Photo: Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 134<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard.

**120814-Z-MW427-213**

Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh talks with Pfc. Chantal Miller, a medic in the Alaska Army National Guard Medical Detachment, at the medical clinic during his visit of the various Khaan Quest 12 exercise locations in and around Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 14. Khaan Quest is a regularly scheduled, multinational exercise sponsored by the U.S. Army Pacific and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces. Photo: Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 134<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard.